**Community Engagement Officer**

**(Wales)**

Candidate Brief

January 2024

**Overview**

Thank you for your interest in this exciting role. We hope that this pack gives you all the information you need to make your application.

We promote the advancement of human rights and equality for Deaf people by collaborating with our members and stakeholders to influence governments to ensure that Deaf people to access services in their own language: British Sign Language (BSL) or Irish Sign Language (ISL), the first or preferred language of c.87,000 Deaf people in the UK.

The BDA was instrumental in securing the BSL Act in April 2022, meaning that BSL is legally recognised as a protected UK minority language. This was seismic, and we hope it can lead to Deaf people, marginalised for so long, participating and contributing as equal and valued citizens in wider society.

We are proud that all our Board of Trustees and 88% of our staff are Deaf and our working language is BSL/ISL. We are proud to invest in BSL/ISL training for hearing staff and our onboarding programme includes a range of workshops delivered by our experienced staff. As an organisation, we know on a personal level how much work is needed to deliver equity for Deaf people.

We are a membership organisation, advocating for our sign language rights across the UK: we are embedded in the Deaf communities of all four UK nations and have a diverse, fully representative team.

Trusted by the Deaf communities of all four nations, we have shown through our campaign successes that we have the respect of the UK’s governments. Everything the BDA does goes towards ensuring that the language, culture, community, diversity and heritage of Deaf people in the UK is respected and fully protected.

**About the BDA**

Founded in 1890, the British Deaf Association (BDA) is the UK’s only official national representative organisation of BSL and ISL and has been an Ordinary Member of the [World Federation of the Deaf](https://wfdeaf.org/) (a United Nations consultative organisation) since 1957 and a member of the [European Union of the Deaf](https://www.eud.eu/) (a participatory member of the Council of Europe) since its foundation in 1985. Our BDA Youth committee are members of the [World Federation of the Deaf Youth Section](https://wfdys.org/) and [European Union of the Deaf Youth](https://eudy.info/), representing young Deaf people in the UK.

As a Deaf-led membership charity, led and represented by Deaf people for Deaf people, we campaign and advocate for equal rights to fully participate and contribute to society as equal and valued citizens.

The passing of the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 and the BSL Act 2022, was the absolute pinnacle of our work and why we exist. We are entering an exciting new chapter in our history, with the launch of our 2022-2032 strategic vision setting out the BDA’s aspirations for Deaf people in the UK for the next decade and beyond, following the historic legal recognition of our language. You can read more about our strategic vision here: <https://bda.org.uk/strategic-vision/>

Within this pack you will find information about the BDA, the job description, key requirement, and details on how to apply. Please contact us if you would like an informal conversation at any point, please email [recruitment@bda.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@bda.org.uk)

**Our work**

Our work is centred around 4 activities:

1. **Community & Advocacy**

We work with our members and the Deaf community to empower them to have their views heard and listened to. We bring Deaf people together to take action around their concerns and overcome social injustice.

Through the BSL Charter, we connect the Deaf community with public services giving them the confidence to share concerns about issues that affect them, and to ensure that Deaf people have access to clear and full information to make informed decisions when dealing with service providers.

As Deaf community organisers, we provide training and workshops with members of the Deaf community to build their collective power and to seek representation on decision-making boards and platforms. This community involvement is crucial: we are utilising our voice as a strong leader in the UK to tell decision-makers that there is no longer anything about us, without us.

1. **Training & Consultancy**

We conduct Human Rights and Capacity Building training with our members and the Deaf community. Additionally, we provide BSL Awareness training to provide participants with a greater understanding of BSL as a language and an insight into Deaf culture.

Additionally, we formed an independent BSL Alliance, a coalition of Deaf organisations across the UK to strengthen BSL in Britain.

The BDA produces policy papers, statements, and guidelines so that members have up to date tools to inform the BSL Alliance and our stakeholders of Deaf people’s rights and how to achieve them.

1. **Human Rights & Equality**

As the representative body, the BDA works to ensure Deaf people across the UK are equipped with the knowledge, tools and strategies to advocate for, achieve and defend their rights including:

* Gaining recognition and respect for BSL/ISL and Deaf culture
* Achieving their rights across all areas of life, including equal opportunity and accessibility

By promoting human rights and access to BSL/ISL, the BDA is improving the lives of thousands of Deaf people who face inequality every day. We collaborate with Deaf leaders and policymakers to implement human rights mechanisms such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 and BSL Act 2022 as well as other legislations. We also take direct action by providing Equality & Rights training and representing Deaf people’s interests in the UK.

1. **Sign Language & Culture**

We work with our members and partners to shape our world into a more equitable place through the following events to promote our language:

* BSL Conferences

Takes place every year, the BDA’s BSL Conference is an official event of the BDA, designed to bring together public services and the Deaf community who seek to partake in national exchange of information and furtherance of the BDA’s campaigns.

* AGM Weekends

The annual BDA AGM brings together members to further the objects of the BDA, elect candidates to our Board of Trustees and have a say on key organisational decisions. The weekend usually includes a Friday night gathering at the local Deaf club, a prestigious Gala Dinner on Saturday evening and concludes with a local BSL walking tour on the Sunday.

* Sign Language Week

Sign Language Week is BDA’s flagship awareness week celebrated every year in March to commemorate the first time BSL was acknowledged as a language in its own right by the UK Government on 18 March 2003. The aim is to celebrate and educate the British public about BSL and to encourage more people to start learning our language.

* International Week of the Deaf

International Week of the Deaf is an initiative of the WFD and was first launched in 1958 in Rome, Italy. It is celebrated annually by the global Deaf Community on the last week of September each year to commemorate the same month the first World Congress of the WFD was held.

**“The BDA is the Deaf community.”**

**– Roundtable participant, 2022**

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# JOB DESCRIPTION

# Job title: Community Engagement Officer – Wales

**Hours**: 35 hours per week

**Salary:** £25,000 - £30,000 per annum

**Reports to:** BDA Wales Manager

# Location: Cardiff based with remit across Wales

**Contract:** 35 hours a week (full-time) permanent. A willingness to work evenings and at weekends as required.

**Holidays:** 25 days a year plus 8 Bank Holidays

**Pension:** BDA operates a contributory pension scheme and will auto-enrol you into the scheme in accordance with its auto-enrolment obligations

**About the role**

**Job Summary:**

BDA is currently providing local support to Deaf people through empowerment and advocacy in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England. The aim is community advocacy, community empowerment, and the development of local consultations to ensure that local public service providers carry out BSL Charter pledges.

We are seeking a committed individual from the Deaf community to work with their local Deaf communities and set up forums, training sessions, and consultation activities in line with the Community Development strategy. The successful candidate will have a proven track record in working with Deaf people and is known for accepting challenges.

This needs to be an individual who is passionate about promoting the BDA as the only organisation that empowers Deaf BSL users to improve access and inclusion. The post is based in the South Wales region and travel throughout the region is expected.

The post holder will also support the advancement of the ‘Prepare’ and ‘Promote’ elements of BDA strategy (pages 22 & 23 <https://bda.org.uk/strategic-vision/>), specifically:

* **Prepare** – the ground among Deaf communities in the UK (Wales) through regional member forums to build the #BSL2032 movement leading to positive action by decision-makers (1.1 and 1.4)
* **Promote** – increased awareness of BSL through engagement with key stakeholders (2.3)

With activities focusing on two sections of the BDA’s Operating Model Canvas (OMC):

* **Community, Sign Language, Deaf Culture & Identity** by providing information on language rights and signposting to 3rd party services and bringing the Deaf community together by capacity building to understand and advocate for their sign language rights.
* **Human Rights, Advocacy & Equality** through the provision of Advocacy information to service users and community groups. Additionally, the helpline and BDA advocates network will form a part of the activities provided under this remit.

# The Role

The role is to empower local Deaf people through community engagement working with local community groups, setting up forums and information sessions in line with the BDA’s strategic objectives. Working with local service providers to promote the BSL Charter and improve accessibility is an integral part of the role.

# Main Tasks and Responsibilities

1. Ensure Outcomes are met by

* Providing community support and advocacy to local Deaf people on an individual basis, either as a one-off or through regular sessions so Deaf people are more confident in accessing local services
* Providing information sessions so Deaf people learn how to better understand how to access local services
* Ensuring Deaf people have improved wellbeing and personal outcomes due to better engagements with service providers
* Working with service providers to ensure that they can demonstrate improved awareness of Deaf access needs.

1. To achieve the above, carry out the following:

* Deliver information sessions at a range of key locations, ensuring geographic coverage across the region
* Identify and provide best-practice Deaf access training to stakeholder services and to provide on-going advice and review opportunities in the implementation best practice measures
* Promote all project activities through Deaf accessible-media including the British Deaf News and the BDA’s website, and through relevant stakeholder organisations.

1. Compile monthly reports tracking progress against project activity plan, outcome indicators and project budget
2. Develop relationships with local Deaf communities and gather evidence from Deaf people to improve BDA’s response to local Deaf communities as part of the Community Development strategy
3. When required, recruit, train and oversee the accreditation of a team of volunteer advocates from across target region
4. When volunteers are recruited, provide on-going supervision and support to volunteer advocates, reviewing and advising on their caseloads
5. Ensure monitoring of all volunteer advocate activity against identified indicators and project activity plan
6. Support the establishment of a steering group and to organise and service quarterly steering group meetings
7. Implement best practice and remedial recommendations as identified and advised by the steering group and Access & Inclusion Co-ordinator (Advocacy).
8. When applicable, promote the project and the BDA at local events that attract large gatherings such as Disability Days
9. Support the Senior Community Development Manager in developing partnerships with local organisations (e.g. local Deaf services) to enhance the BDA’s profile and meet the Community Development strategy
10. Support other BDA initiatives such as fundraising events, lobbying and other social events
11. Contribute to the organisation’s functions by meeting its administrative requirements including recording and tracking of all project expenditure
12. Any other duties of a related nature, including those identified as essential to the successful delivery of project activities and outcomes in Wales.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**Skills / Experience**

The candidate will have excellent communication skills and have the ability to adjust to the variety of communication methods used within the Deaf community, have experience of working with Deaf people in different settings, and be able to work on their own initiative.

They will be able to work on developing successful interventions that promote empowerment for both their clients and their local Deaf communities.

**Essential**

* Experience of working with Deaf people
* Delivering community events and workshops such as organising forums
* Experience of public speaking/presentation
* Have the ability to use British Sign Language (BSL) to a minimum of level 3
* Able to work independently and as part of a team contributing toward s the overall work of the BDA in Wales
* Confidence to work with people at all levels and managing challenging situations
* Ability to meet organisational targets and work on their own initiative.
* Understand and commit to equal opportunities and ‘safeguarding‘

**Desirable**

* Experience of Advocacy with at least Level 2 qualification in Advocacy
* Manage regular reports and other evidence of any impact of the BDA’s work with Deaf communities.
* Experience of Monitoring and Evaluation

**Knowledge / Qualifications**

**Essential**

1. Knowledge of MS Office and database.
2. Knowledge and understanding of Deaf issues facing Deaf people, including an awareness of Deaf culture and varying communication methods
3. Proven track record of successful study.

**Desirable**

1. GCSE or equivalent demonstrating competence in English
2. Have a good knowledge about disability rights, equality issues and responsibilities and their relevance to Deaf people and how to access them
3. Ability to speak use basic Welsh or willingness to learn
4. Have some understanding of the structures and workings of government in Wales
5. Understanding of marketing skills
6. Understanding of local consultation processes with service providers
7. Understanding of local access and inclusion issues, including the structures and working of Local Government departments in Wales.

**Other requirements**

The successful candidate will be required to:

1. The successful candidate will be required to undertake an enhanced DBS check.
2. Drive their own car or be able to use public transport easily across Wales
3. Work flexible hours including evenings and weekends.